ADDITIONAL AID TO INDUSTRIAL COLLEGES.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

FACULTY OF THE EAST TENNESSEE UNIVERSITY,

SHOWING

Reasons why Congress should render additional aid to colleges established and to be established under the original and amended law of 1862.

JANUARY 6, 1873.—Referred to the Committee on Education and Labor and ordered to be printed.

To the Senators and Representatives of Tennessee in the Congress of the United States:

The faculty of the East Tennessee University would most respectfully submit some of the reasons which, in their judgment, render it expedient and proper for the General Government to render additional aid to the colleges already established and hereafter to be established under the original and amended law of 1862.

When that act was passed, industrial education was an untried experiment in the United States. This law opened a new chapter in American education. For many years the foremost governments of Europe have made munificent provisions for the maintenance of institutions of learning wherein their citizens might fit themselves for the great industrial occupations of agriculture, architecture, mining, and manufacturing; and the unanimous testimony and concurrent experience of all who have examined the workings and witnessed the fruits of these industrial institutions unite in praise of the wisdom and sound policy of maintaining them.

Considering the universal popularity of these institutions in the countries where they exist, it may be a matter of surprise that they were so long making their way to America, where education is in esteem next to religion. But the truth is, that there was and had long been a wide-spread desire on the part of the educators of America to introduce these institutions. The means, however, were wanting. The many "manual-labor" schools and colleges that have been attempted throughout the country were fruits of this desire for industrial education, and the failure of each and all is traceable to a lack of means. But these many failures did not eradicate the desire, although they did fix the conviction that, to succeed, each institution must needs be richly endowed. Thus was created a public sentiment which, if it did not beget, has justified the act of Congress donating certain public lands for agri-

cultural and mechanical college purposes. It may safely be said that Congress never made a more popular disposition of any part of the public domain. And we believe that time will prove that no wiser use can ever be made of them.

The act of 1862 opened the way for such institutions; laid the foundation, indeed, for one or more in each State. Since then, many experiments have been tried, and much information gained by observation, reflection, and experience. Within no similar period of time has so much earnest and wise thought been given to the consideration of the relations of the industrial classes to education, and to the means by which the wants growing out of those relations can be best satisfied. The subject is yet far from exhaustion. The work is still going on. To one conclusion, however, all have come, and that is, that the work is of far greater dimensions than was imagined when the original law was enacted, and that, in proportion to its magnitude, its importance increases.

Munificent as the original grant of Congress was thought to be, it is found to be insignificant in comparison with what much poorer nations of Europe have done, and, in every State of the Union, wholly inadequate to the establishment and maintenance of one college such as the wants and interests of the industrial classes demand. Differ as they may and do on plans of college organization, the friends of the industrial colleges created by Congress are unanimous in the opinion that further aid is absolutely necessary to the successful operation of any well-digested and comprehensive plan. In this opinion they are supported by all of the wisest and best educators in the countries where such institutions have been successfully operated for years. Universal experience has demonstrated that the higher education needs endowment. It never can be made self-sustaining. And the higher it is, the more endowment it needs in proportion to the numbers to be educated. Of the direct influence of such institutions on the moral and material welfare of the nations by whom they are sustained, ample proof is furnished in the statistics of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, in the testimony of the wisest statesmen, and the observation of most intelligent travelers; and, above all, in the grand industrial expositions that have been held within the past twenty years. But the influence of these schools on the material welfare of other nations is but small in comparison with what they may do for the people of America.

Proud, as we have a right to be, and boast as we may of the achievements of American mechanics and manufacturers, merchants and engineers, it cannot be denied that only a small part of the resources of the country has been developed. The harvest is indeed plentiful, and the laborers are few. The demand is unlimited for educated farmers, miners, manufacturers, engineers, architects, and merchants—for men with just such an education as these industrial colleges are designed to furnish.

Nor are these, either, the greatest or most important influences to flow from the liberal endowment of the industrial colleges. Of the many achievements of which Americans may boast, none is oftener or more fondly pointed to than the free-school system, which is known throughout the world as the American system. Of its merits we need not speak. Its praise is in every mouth and known of all men. The one great want of this system is competent teachers. In the older States this want has impaired the efficiency of the public schools of every grade, notwithstanding they have had the rich reservoirs of successful colleges to draw from, while in the new States, and in some of the older ones, where free schools are new things, their efficient introduction is almost prohibited

by this want of competent teachers. Notably is this the case in our own State of Tennessee. It is possible that, under the stimulus of competition, the wants of the farmer and mechanic might be supplied by individual enterprise in the course of time; but for the supply of competent teachers for the lower grades of public schools by individual enterprise there is no hope. Private means are wholly inadequate to the task. Competent teachers can only be trained in schools or colleges organized on permanent and liberal basis. It is utterly vain and utopian to attempt to foster or create common schools without the aid of higher schools, colleges, and universities. But given the colleges and universities, and the common schools come easily, if not naturally, into being. But colleges and universities are costly. They cannot be established without a large outlay of money; they cannot be maintained without a liberal and permanent endowment.

By the act of 1862 Congress has recognized the fact that the work of establishing these centers of learning belongs to the nation at large. The grand experiment has been well begun; yet only begun. In order that what has been begun may be completed in all the fullness of the design, it is essential that Congress do more. And, happily, the means for doing this work are ready at hand. The public lands may become a grand source of national wealth and power, or of immeasurable national calamities, according as they are applied to good and beneficent purposes, or made the prey of public plunderers and the cause of public corruption. It is manifest to every one who reads the signs of the times that the dedication of the greater part of these lands to educational purposes meets with the hearty approval of the people to whom the lands belong.

The increasing popularity and vigor of all attempts at educating or otherwise improving the condition of the industrial classes is one of the most marked characteristics of the times throughout Christendom. And the American people feel that this is a work in which they should take a leading part. No State stands more in need of common schools than Tennessee; in none is the lack of competent teachers greater. Until this want is in some measure supplied, no system of common schools that may be adopted can be made to flourish and produce good fruit. In administering the affairs of the Tennessee Agricultural College, this want has been most painfully felt by us. And yet, in every attempt at remedying it, we have found ourselves almost powerless for lack of sufficient means. In this way we are every day made to feel the necessity for further endowment, in order that the work begun so wisely may be as wisely completed.

It were too long a story to attempt to detail the wants which have met us in the short time that we have been in charge of the Agricultural College, but the scope and character of these wants may be understood and imagined by the enumeration of a few. We want cabinets of minerals, ores, and earth, timbers and building-stones, museums of natural history and the industrial resources of the State, libraries in all the arts, sciences, and belles-letters, and all manner of philosophical and chemical apparatus; in short, a complete repository of all the best-known appliances for obtaining a complete and thorough education. That all these things could be obtained in one day or one year, if the most unlimited means were at hand, we do not expect. Nor are they all needed to-day; but many of them are needed now, and all of them will be needed as our institution develops and grows, as we have every reason to believe it will. And it is in view of this promised growth that we are urgently solicitous to have the means secured wherewith to

provide for these wants as they may arise. Now is the golden opportunity. A glance at the disposition of the public lands within the last ten years will be sufficient to satisfy any one that, if this aid to education is not secured now, in ten years more it cannot be obtained from public lands. The speculators will have absorbed them.

But we feel that we need not press this matter on you. Your good sense will point out more clearly than we can the wants of the case, and your regard for the public interest will prompt you to act in the matter. Yet we should have thought that we had neglected our own duty if we had not brought the subject to your attention.

Hoping that you may, individually and as a delegation, find it consistent with your sense of duty and the public interest to give your hearty support to the bill of Senator Morrill,

We are, very respectfully, your obedient servants, on behalf of the faculty,

THOMAS W. HUMES,
President.

HUNTER NICHOLSON,
Clerk of Faculty.